



DECISION MEMO
MOUNTAIN PARKS ELECTRIC INC (MPEI) POLE REPLACEMENT PROJECT
USDA FOREST SERVICE
ROUTT NATIONAL FOREST
YAMPA RANGER DISTRICT
GRAND COUNTY, COLORADO

BACKGROUND

Mountain Parks Electric Inc. (MPEI) is currently authorized to operate and maintain approximately 12 powerlines located on all three Districts of the Routt National Forest under a Special Use Permit (HBE413) issued in 2008. MPEI proposes to maintain a section of a single-phase power line located on the Yampa District, Routt NF, Grand County, Sections 34 and 35, T.5N. R.82W. 6th P.M.. The existing conductor, poles, and hardware are in need of upgrades due to code requirements and safety reasons. MPEI proposes to re-route a significant portion of the power line off National Forest System (NFS) lands and onto private land to be located closer to a two track access road. Currently there are 9 poles, 2 guywires and anchors on NFS lands.

The proposed reroute will remove 5 poles (#'s: 26227, 26228, 26229, 26230, and 26231) from NFS lands and relocate 4 poles to new locations as described: 26223 with new guywires and anchors north of existing pole, 26224- south, 26225-south, and 26226 with new guywires and anchors to the south). See Exhibit A.

Old poles will be cut at ground level and removed off NFS lands. All other unused materials will be removed off NFS lands. All work will be conducted in the winter with 12" of compacted snow or more on the ground.

DECISION

I have decided to amend the special use permit to Mountain Parks Electric Inc to move 4 power poles and remove 5 poles located in Sections 34 and 35, T.5N. R.82W. 6th P.M and depicted in Exhibit A. This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA). The applicable category of actions is identified in agency procedures as 36 CFR 220.6(e)(2) – Additional construction or reconstruction of existing telephone or utility lines in a designated corridor.

I find that there are no extraordinary circumstances that would warrant further analysis and documentation in an EA or EIS. Scoping to issue a special use permit was initiated through a project description sent to Forest Service resource specialists. I took into account resource conditions identified in agency procedures that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances might exist. They are:

- Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or FS sensitive species:
 - Wildlife: This project will have ‘no impact’ on Region 2 sensitive species; ‘no effects’ on threatened, endangered, candidate, or proposed species; and ‘no influence’ on the population trend on management indicator species.
 - Fisheries: The project would have no effect on Region 2 sensitive aquatic species.
 - Botany: The project area will not affect potential habitat for rare plants that are federally listed as threatened or endangered, for Region 2 sensitive species, or for species of local concern.
 - Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds: There are no adverse effects expected to the water, riparian, wetland, floodplain or municipal water supply resources associated with the project due to the design elements incorporated into the proposed action.
- Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas: There are no congressionally designated wilderness areas, wilderness study areas or national recreation areas within the project area.
- Colorado roadless areas or potential wilderness areas: The project area is not within either a Colorado roadless area or a potential wilderness area.
- Research natural areas: The project area is not within a research natural area.
- American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites: No known native religious or cultural sites have been identified.
- Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas: A cultural survey was completed and all cultural sites avoided.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This action was listed as a proposal on the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grasslands Schedule of Proposed Actions in November 2019.

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

This decision is consistent with the Routt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, 1997 Revision. The project was designed in conformance with the Management Area Direction and the Forest-Wide Standards and Guidelines, which fall entirely under category 5.12, General Forest and Rangelands Range Vegetation Emphasis.

DESIGN CRITERIA

The project was designed to avoid concerns related to travel across riparian areas and operations within archeology sites. No additional Design Criteria is needed.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW (APPEAL) OPPORTUNITIES

The approved activities within this decision are not subject to appeal in accordance with the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014, Pub. L. No. 113-76, 128 Stat. 5 (2014). Section 431 of the Act directs that the 1993 and 2012 legislation establishing the 36 CFR 215 (post-decisional appeals) and 36 CFR 218 (pre-decisional objections) processes “shall not apply to any project or activity



implementing a land and resource management plan...that is categorically excluded...under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).”

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

This decision may be implemented once there is 12” of compacted snow or more on the ground in the project area.

CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact: Janet Faller, Realty Specialist, Routt National Forest, 925 Weiss Drive, Steamboat Springs, CO 80487, (970) 870-2174, janet.faller@usda.gov.

1-9-2020

RUSSELL M. BACON

Date

Forest Supervisor

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland

“The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual’s income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.”

